

Message Text

SECRET

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42-S
ACTION EA-14

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R 281204Z SEP 73
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE 2ASHDC 7006

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EA FOR AMBASSADOR UNGER

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS : MASS, TH
SUBJECT : MAP SUPPORT OF THAI VOLUNTEER DEFENCE CORPS (VDC)

REF: SECDEF 272034Z SEPT 73 (NOTAVOL

1. DOD/ISA HAS REQUESTED (BY REFTEL) THAT COMUSMAVUC I FURNISH ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT WHY THE US SHOULD SUPPORT THE THAI VDC PARAMILITARY LOCAL SECURITY FORCES. (THIS IS THE THIRD SUCH REQUEST TO WHICH MACTHAI WILL REPLY) DOD STATES THAT IT ANTICIPATES DIFFICULTY EXPLAINING TO CONGRESS WHY THE USG SHOULD SUPPORT A PART-TIME PARAMILITARY COUNTERINSURGENCY FORCE AT A TIME WHEN THE USG HAS WITHDRAWN CERTAIN TYPES OF SUPPORT FROM THE TNPD, A FULL-TIME FORCE. THEY ALSO RESTATE DOD POLICY (NOT, HOWEVER, AS WE UNDERSTAND IT BASED UPON LAW) THAT MAP FUNDS NOT BE USED TO SUPPORT FORCES NOT PART OF THE REGULAR MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT.

2. COMUSMACTHAI WILL RESPOND TO THIS REQUEST THROUGH MILITARY CHANNELS.

3. I AM DEEPLY CONCERNED THAT THESE REPEATED DOD REQUESTS FOR MORE INFORMATION (WHICH ACTUALLY HAS ALREADY BEEN PROVIDED) AND PARTICULARLY THIS RECENT INVOCATION OF POSSIBLE CONGRESSIONAL SECRET

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CONCERN IN LAYING GROUNDWORK FOR A REFUSAL TO AUTHORIZE MAP

SUPPORT OF THE PROGRAM. USAID WASHINGTON HALTED PROGRAM SUPPLY OF MILITARY-TYPE EQUIPMENT TO THE TNPD BECAUSE CONGRESSIONAL CRITICS OF US AID HAVE OPINED THAT US SUPPORT OF LOCAL POLICE PROGRAMS HAS REINFORCED REPRESSIVE REGIMES. DOD CHOSE NOT TO SUPPORT THE POLICE WITH SGU WEAPONS APPARENTLY OUT OF CONCERN FOR THIS SENSITIVITY AND PROBABLY OUT OF A DESIRE TO AVOID OPENING DOOR TO FUTURE DEVIATIONS FROM ESTABLISHED AMP POLICY.

4. USG SUPPORT OF THE VDC IS AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT MATTER. THE VDC ARE NOT A POLICE FORCE, THEY ARE A TERRITORIAL MILITIA. ALTHOUGH ADMINISTERED BY THE MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR, THE VDC IS BEING TRAINED, SUPPLIED, ADVISED AND -- BEGINNING NOW -- LED BY THE ROYAL THAI ARMY. THE PURPOSE OF THIS FORCE IS TO PROTECT THAI VILLAGERS FROM COMMUNIST INSURGENTS AND TO PREVENT THE INSURGENTS FROM OBTAINING EASY ACCESS TO THE SUPPORT WHICH THEY MUST HAVE TO SURVIVE. THE VDC, MOREOVER, IS THE THAI NATIONAL DEFENSE RESERVE FORCE. ASSOCIATING SUPPORT FOR THE VDC WITH SUPPORT FOR THE POLICE IS AKIN TO EQUATING RAMBUTAN AND MANGOSTEEN.

5. THE VDC IS ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL PILLARS OF THAI COUNTER-INSURGENCY, THE LOCAL (VILLAGE) SECURITY ELEMENT OF THE THAI SYSTEM. IN ACTUALITY, PERHAPS 80 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL RTG FORCES THAT ARE IN THE FIELD DAILY COMBATTING INSURGENTS ARE VDC PERSONNEL. THEY ARE FULL-TIME SOLDIERS WHEN THEY ARE ON ACTIVE DUTY, NOT PART-TIME EMPLOYEES.

6. THE THAI NEED US SUPPORT FOR THE VDC PROGRAM AT LEST THROUGH FY 75. IN TERMS OF THAI COUNTER-INSURGENCY REQUIREMENTS, THE PRIMARY NON-POLITICAL OBJECTIVE OF MAP, THERE IS NO SINGLE MORE IMPORTANT ELEMENT IN THE MAP PROGRAM. WE, IN FACT, SOLD THE THAI ON THE ESSENTIAL NEED FOR AN EFFECTIVE VILLAGE DEFENSE SYSTEM. WITHOUT US SUPPORT AT THIS JUNCTURE, THE RTA -- WHICH HAS RECENTLY TAKEN OVER THE MANAGEMENT OF THE PROGRAM -- WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY REDUCE ITS SUPPORT OF AND ATTENTION TO THE PROGRAM. HALTING OF MAP SUPPORT FOR THE VDC WOULD BE A CRIPPLING BLOW TO THAI COUNTER-INSURGENCY EFFORTS, ESPECIALLY IN THE POPULATED AREAS IN AND NEAR THE PHUPHAN MOUNTAINS. IT ALSO WOULD

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CRIPPLE OUR COUNTER-INSURGENCY SUPPORT EFFORTS.

7. IF YOU SHARE MY CONCERN, BELIEVE IT WOULD BE MOST USEFUL FOR YOU TO TAKE THIS UP IN THE DEPARTMENT, INCLUDING AT HIGHEST LEVELS IF NECESSARY, TO GET THIS PROGRAM ON THE TRACKS AT LONG LAST AND ENSURE MAP SUPPORT FOR THE VDC WHICH WE REGARD AS AN ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL ELEMENT IN THAI COUNTER-INSURGENCY EFFORTS.

MASTERS

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